

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 02341 171944Z

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: PRAVDA ARTICLE MAY GIVE INDICATION OF LEADERSHIP STATUS

1. SUMMARY. AS IF TO GIVE KREMLINOLOGISTS SOMETHING TO CHEW ON WHILE WAITING FOR THE 25TH CONGRESS, PRAVDA FEBRUARY 15 CARRIES A LENGTHY UNSIGNED BOOK REVIEW WHICH MENTIONS MOST BUT NOT ALL OF THE CURRENT CPSU LEADERSHIP. MOREOVER, SOME OF THOSE MENTIONED ARE PRAISED FOR QUALITIES WITH WHICH THEY ARE NOT USUALLY ASSOCIATED. THREE FULL POLITBURO MEMBER -- PODGORNYY, MAZUROV, AND POLYANSKIY-- ARE CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT. END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE OBTAINED THE BOOK UNDER REVIEW, WHICH IS ENTITLED "THE 24TH CPSU CONGRESS: THE UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE." IT IS THE THIRD VOLUME IN A
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 02341 171944Z

SERIES JOINTLY PRODUCED BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF

"KOMMUNIST" AND THE POLITICAL LITERATURE PUBLISHING HOUSE. THE CURRENT VOLUME, SIGNED TO PRESS ON JANUARY 4, 1976, COVERS MATERIALS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED DURING 1975. THE MATERIALS ARE ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE RANK AND ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF THE AUTHORS: THUS THE TABLE OF CONTENTS BEGINS WITH FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS, AND INCLUDES BREZHNEV (FOUR ITEMS), GRECHKO, GRISHIN, GROMYKO, KIRILENKO, KOSYGIN, KULAKOV, KUNAYEV, PEL'SHE, SUSLOV (TWO ITEMS), AND SHCHERBITSKIY. NEXT COME CANDIDATE POLITBURO MEMBERS MASHEROV, PONOMAREV (TWO ITEMS), RASHIDOV AND ROMANOV, AND FINALLY CC SECRETARIES KAPITONOV AND KAATUSHEV. THE ARTICLES WHICH MAKE UP THE BOOK ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN VARIOUS SOURCES, INCLUDING KOMMUNIST, PARTIINAYA ZHIZN', PRAVDA, AND PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM.

3. ALL OF THE LEADERS INCLUDED IN THE BOOK ARE MENTIONED IN PRAVDA'S REVIEW ARTICLE, ALTHOUGH THE REVIEW REGROUPS THEM ACCORDING TO SUBJECT MATTER. THUS:

-- BREZHNEV IS THE FIRST LEADER MENTIONED, IN A PARAGRAPH ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC TASKS (HE IS LATER ALSO CITED UNDER SCIENCE, MARXISM-LENINISM, AND FOREIGN POLICY);

-- THE NEXT LEADER TO BE CITED AFTER BREZHNEV IS KIRILENKO, WHO IS PRAISED FOR AN ARTICLE ON ECONOMIC POLICY;

-- GRISHIN, KUNAYEV, RASHIDOV AND ROMANOV ARE NEXT LAUDED FOR ARTICLES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS;

-- KULAKOV AND MASHEROV ARE NEXT CITED FOR ARTICLES ON AGRARIAN POLICY;

-- SHCHERBITSKIY AND KAPITONOV THEN RECEIVE PLAUDITS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATIONAL AND POLITICAL WORK;

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 02341 171944Z

-- SUSLOV, PEL'SHE, GRECHKO AND PONOMAREV ARE CITED FOR ITEMS ON IDEOLOGY;

-- AND KOSYGIN, SUSLOV, GROMYKO, PONOMAREV AND KATUSHEV ARE PRAISED FOR FOREIGN POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS.

4. COMMENT. THIS ARTICLE COULD CONCEIVABLY BE AN INDICATION OF WHO MAY BE UP, AND WHO MAY BE DOWN, ON THE

EVE OF THE 25TH CONGRESS. THE FACT THAT IT IS UNSIGNED, AND PROMINENTLY FEATURED ON PRAVDA'S SECOND PAGE (IT TAKES UP THE BOTTOM THIRD OF THE PAGE, IS SET OFF BY DOUBLE LINES, AND CARRIES THE LARGE HEADLINE "THE UN-BREAKABLE UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE") HEIGHTENS ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FIRST TWO VOLUMES WERE SIMILARLY REVIEWED ON PRAVDA'S SECOND PAGE (SEE PRAVDA OF NOVEMBER 18, 1973 AND MAY 17, 1975). THE 1973 REVIEW ARTICLE LISTS, IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER: BREZHNEV, KOSYGIN, KUNAYEV, SHCHERBITSKIY, GRISHIN, PODGORNYY, MASHEROV, RASHIDOV, SOLOMENTSEV, KIRILENKO, SUSLOV, PEL SHE, KAPITONOV, DEMICHEV, PONOMAREV, KATUSHEV. THE 1975 REVIEW LISTS, IN THIS ORDER: BREZHNEV, PODGORNYY, KOSYGIN, KIRILENKO, SUSLOV, ROMANOV, KULAKOV, SOLOMENTSEV, MAZUROV, SHCHERBITSKIY, RASHIDOV, GRECHKO, GROMYKO, PONOMAREV, AND KATUSHEV.

6. WE ARE THUS LEFT WITH THE QUESTION WHETHER THE CURRENT BOOK AND ITS PRAVDA REVIEW HAVE BROAD POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE ON THE EVE OF THE CONGRESS OR ARE FORTUITOUS PUBLISHING EVENTS WHICH WERE NOT CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED TO REFLECT CURRENT LEADERSHIP STANDINGS. THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE FEBRUARY 15 ARTICLE ARUGE FOR THE FIRST INTERPRETATION:

-- THE ABSENCE OF PODGORNYY, POLYANSKIY AND MAZUROV IS STRIKING; IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT THE EDITORS OF THE BOOK ARBITRARILY DECIDED THAT NOTHING THESE FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS WROTE DURING 1975 WAS WORTH INCLUDING;

-- IN CONTRAST TO THE TWO EARLIER REVIEWS, KOSYGIN IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 02341 171944Z

MENTIONED AT THE END OF THE 1976 PIECE, AND THEN ONLY FOR FOREIGN POLICY;

-- WITH THE EXCEPTION OF KIRILENKO, NONE OF THE LEADERSHIP USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH OVERALL ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IS PRAISED FOR HIS WORK IN THAT FIELD; AS NOTED, KOSYGIN IS CITED FOR FOREIGN POLICY, AND MAZUROV, SOLOMENTSEV, USTINOV AND DOLGIKH ARE NOT MENTIONED;

-- KIRILENKO, SHCHERBITSKIY, AND MASHEROV SEEM TO BE BOOSTED BY RECEIVING PRAISE FOR QUALITIES NOT USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THEM (ECONOMICS, PARTY ORGANIZATION AND AGRICULTURE, RESPECTIVELY); SUSLOV AND PONOMAREV LOOK GOOD FOR BEING MENTIONED TWICE (FOR MARXISM-LENINISM

AND FOREIGN POLICY), AND ONLY LEADERS OTHER THAN BREZHNEV
TO BE SO-HONORED; AND BREZHNEV NOT SURPRISINGLY
EMERGES HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THE PACK, WITH FOUR
CITATIONS AND SIX TOTAL MENTIONS.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ARE VERY HESITANT TO LAY TOO MUCH STRESS
ON A SINGLE ARTICLE. HOWEVER, IF THIS PIECE IS INTENDED AS A
POLITICAL SIGNAL, ITS MAIN MESSAGE SEEMS TO BE THAT KIRILENKO,
SHCHERBITSKIY, AND PERHAPS MASHEROV ARE ON THE RISE, WHILE
PODGORNY, POLYANSKIY, MAZUROV AND PERHAPS KOSYGIN ARE ON THE
WANE.

7. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS.
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